



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS ALLEGED MS-13 GANG MEMBER BEING SMUGGLED WITH 10 OTHER ILLEGAL ALIENS**

*The gang member had a criminal history and a prior deportation*

HOUSTON — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on Tuesday arrested an MS-13 gang member who was in a group of 10 other illegal aliens being smuggled into the United States. Wharton County Sheriff's Department stopped the group for a traffic violation near Pierce, Texas, and then contacted ICE when the passengers were suspected of being in the U.S. illegally.

Mario Rodolfo Rodriguez-Arevalo, 20, a native of El Salvador and an alleged MS-13 gang member, was riding in the GMC Yukon truck in Wharton County along with 10 other illegal aliens. After taking into custody all the occupants of the vehicle, ICE agents did a background check and determined that Rodriguez Arevalo was previously convicted in Virginia for malicious wounding. He was deported in October 2005. Re-entering the United States after having been deported is a felony offense.

During questioning, Rodriguez-Arevalo claimed he had been smuggled into the United States after paying smugglers \$5,000. He was planning to travel to Miami to meet a relative.

The 11 illegal aliens arrested by ICE are from Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador. Four of the aliens fled the scene on foot after the traffic stop was executed. All were captured and are now in ICE custody.

"Human smuggling poses a serious threat to our border security," said ICE Houston Special Agent-in-Charge Robert Rutt. "That threat is multiplied when violent gang members with criminal histories flee their own countries to seek refuge in ours. ICE's Operation Community Shield targets gang members in the Houston area to help keep our local communities safe."

The arrest of Rodriguez-Arevalo is part of ICE's Operation Community Shield, which was launched in February 2005 to disrupt and dismantle violent, transnational street gangs by bringing to bear ICE's full spectrum of immigration and customs authorities, including drug and financial investigative expertise, against these criminal organizations

To date, ICE's Operation Community Shield has resulted in the arrest of more than 1,900 gang members and associates nationwide, including more than 800 MS-13 street gang members.

The public is encouraged to report suspicious activity by calling ICE's toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*